



DISCOVERING, DEVELOPING AND RELEASING TALENT (DDART)

A TOOLKIT CREATING A TALENT MINDSET

A GUIDE FOR THE FURTHER EDUCATION AND SKILLS SECTOR

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This is important to you because.....

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FORWARD

Discovering, developing and releasing talent – create a talent mindset

'Real talent isn't simply driven by money or power, but by the opportunity to be part of something great' (Culey,S.)

Equip every learner for the 21st century by equipping your teams and organisations so they can fulfill their potential!

Features of effective talent mindset

There is talent everywhere in your organization but much of it is hidden. Set about finding and mining it!
Create a talent mindset: a belief that everyone has talent and can grow.

'We need to move our mindset from how many work here to how many *think* here. (Principal)

'Just what we need... A real challenge... Something a good organisation should be doing' (Manager)

'Talent mindset will challenge traditional management models' (HR Director)

'The best thing that's happened at our college' (the opportunity to 'release talent' through TM) (Senior manager)

Yes - we could contribute more – though not more of the same. We want more control over how we work... (HR Director)

All these quotes come from organisations involved in developing 'talent mindset'.

Talent mindset is a change initiative designed to release all your talent. What was realised by the participating organisations is that in the current climate where they are expected to do more for less, their previous approaches and mindset just wouldn't deliver.

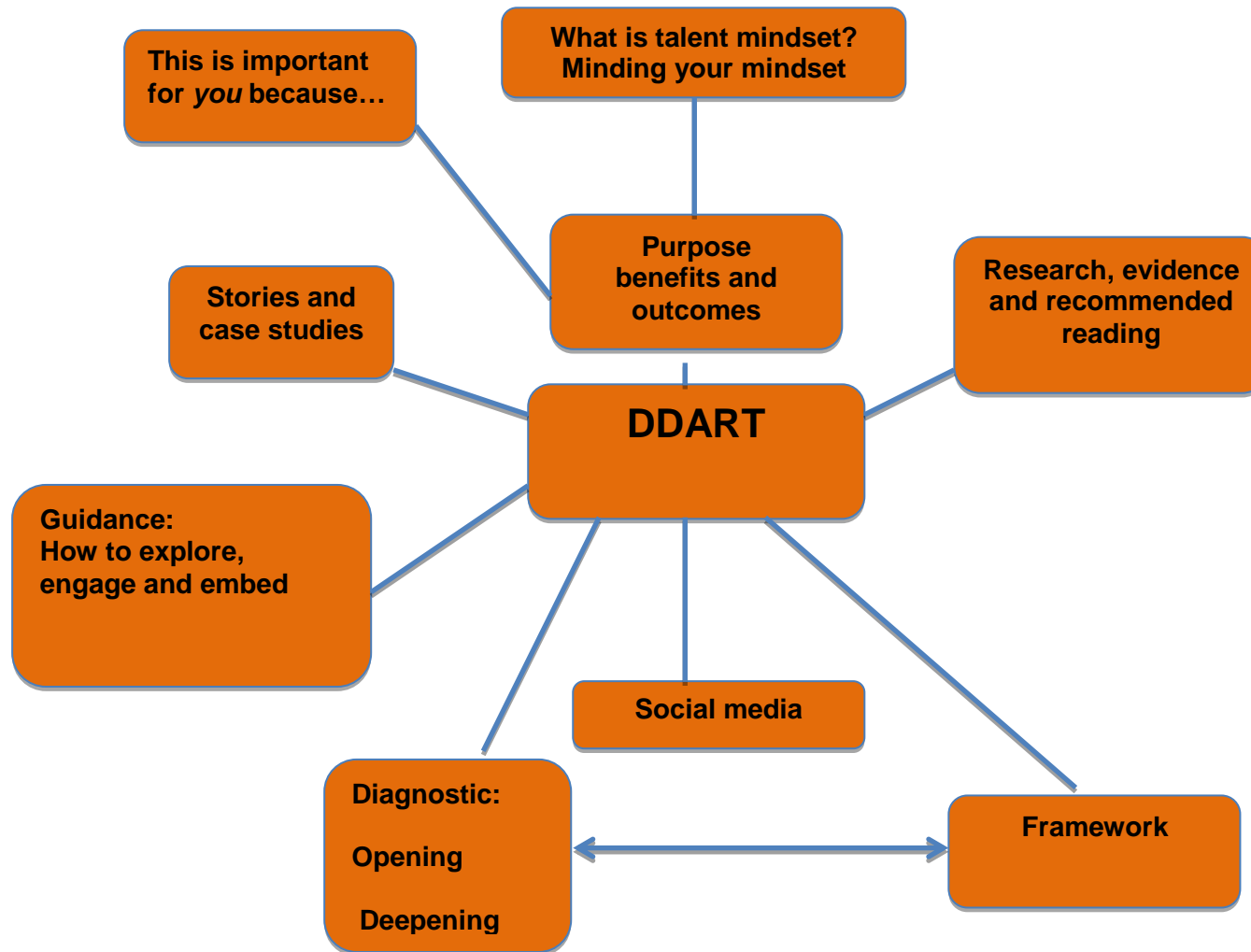
This resource will support you and your organisation in developing a **talent mindset**: a belief that everyone has talent that can be grown and developed in order to create greater collective capability.

You will be interested in this if you need to:

- Increase your capability to meet current challenges
- Develop resilience and sustainability
- Develop greater staff engagement
- Enable innovation
- Create a competitive edge and
- Continually improve your performance.

1. TOOLKIT FOR DISCOVERING, DEVELOPING AND RELEASING TALENT (DDART)

Creating a Talent mindset



2. WHAT IS 'TALENT MINDSET' – TRANSFORMING TALENT MANAGEMENT

Minding your mindset

The issue of mindset is fundamental to this work. 'Mindset' applies to everyone in at some stage. A *fixed* mindset is reflected in phrases like – 'I can't/ they can't'. It can be seen in some managers of their staff, teachers with limiting expectations of learners.

The talent mindset approach seeks to transform traditional talent management. It is based on a growth rather than fixed mindset, where the management of talent is mainstream rather than marginal through 'democratic development', the investment in *all* staff; and to increase organisational capability *continually*, to meet challenging, and uncertain conditions. It involves providers in 'auditing' their overall development process asking: who gets in, on and up; who does/does not get invested in; is there 'unseen talent'; is it fair; and what are the implications for future development and the organisation?

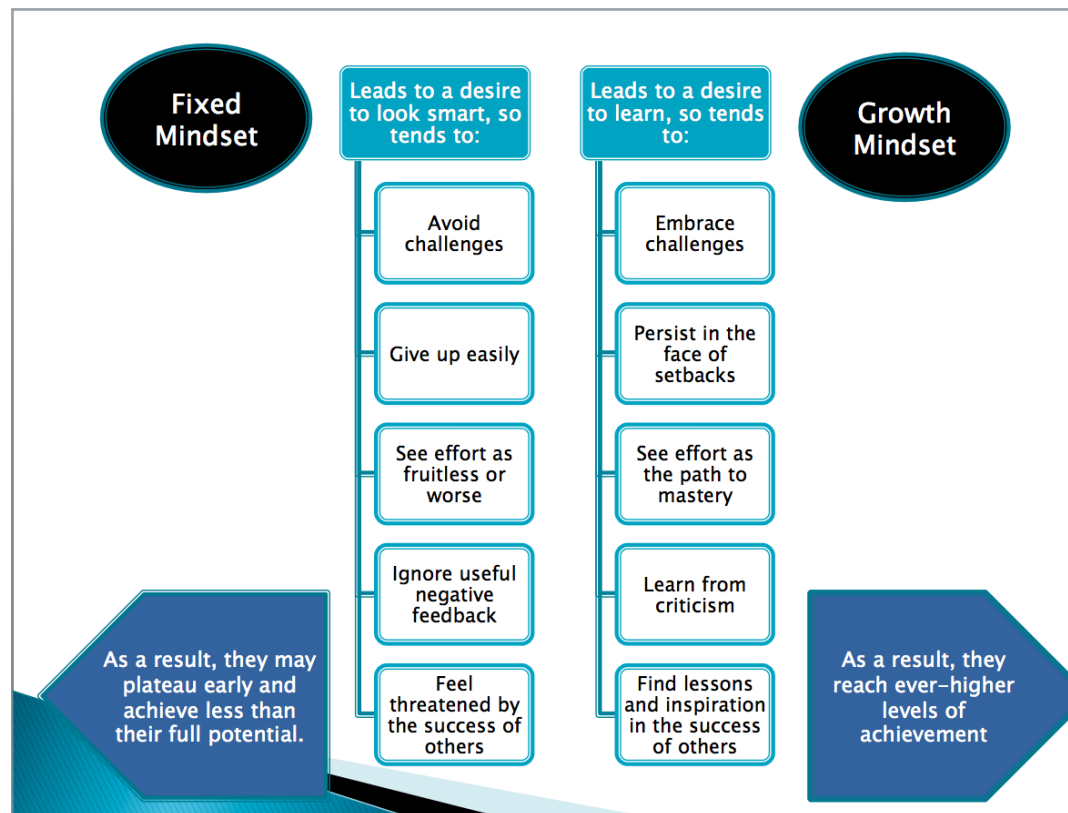
This resource uses talent mindset as a focus for providers to examine their challenges including the issue of 'talent' in leadership, management and governance, teaching and learning, and 'unseen' talent. It offers a framework to develop your own solutions to key questions – how can you build effective development for greater *continuing* capability? How can you evaluate your organisational 'development' investment – its **politics** (who gets what?), its **history** (enabling sustainable effectiveness) and its culture?

Talent mindset aims to give the further education and skills sector a new approach to build *capability* –that is, their collective brainpower - and enable them to manage uncertainty, meet their challenges, and engage *all* staff. It also offers an opportunity to lead the sector. ¹

¹ LINK- SEE THIS IN ACTION – SEE BLOG FOR PARTICIPANT COLLEGE TO BE DISPLAYED ON THEIR MAIN WEBSITE

Growth and fixed mindset explained

What is a mindset? This can be described as the ideas and attitudes with which a person approaches situations. Research from Dr Carol Dweck, California, has identified two specific types of mind set, 'growth' and 'fixed' and shown them to have a marked impact on not just performance and outcomes in situations but in the wellbeing and sustainability of the individuals and their organisations (www.mindsetonline.com). Following is a diagram that illustrates the different characteristics associated with fixed and growth mindsets.



Transforming talent management to talent mindset

Historically the mindset in HR has been related to an 'industrial model' where it was developed for the purposes of control and implementing process. This approach generally created a culture and environment that facilitated or was facilitated by command and control leadership. It encouraged conformity and it discouraged innovation.



Times have changed dramatically and so have HR and its practices. HR continues to evolve in its approach, acknowledging the importance of employee engagement and recognising that there is now an expectation from employees that they will be involved and able to participate in their organisation's development.

Within the sector, this change reflects the approach taken to learners and the responsibility as a provider to ensure that all have equality of opportunity to become all they can, within a learning environment that encourages and supports their wellbeing. Moving from a traditional approach of talent management to a talent mindset will support organisations to be able to deliver this for their staff. It is crucial for this to happen for it to be a transformational process.



Today innovation, (i.e. a positive 'can do' approach) that seeks solutions and does not feel oppressed by fear of 'getting it wrong' is needed more than ever. To deliver this, organisations need to develop a culture where everyone has a 'growth' mindset and is motivated to participate in the delivery of the organisation's mission.

When managers and leaders have a talent mindset, this supports the discovery and development of the talents of everyone in the organisation. Initiative is encouraged and stretch projects are a key vehicle to uncover 'hidden' talent and deliver for the organisation. It enables distributed leadership, preventing discrimination and advancing equality and diversity as an integral part of the process.

This toolkit will take you through different approaches and stages to support the development of a talent mindset. This is about changing how 'talent' is viewed and proposed, in line with all the recent research, that everyone has talent' it just needs the right environment and support to enable it to grow and develop.

First those leading this initiative consider what is *your* mindset? Is your mindset 'fixed' or 'growth'?

Have a look at the tests in the following resource: [Test your mindset - quick online tool](#)

Purpose²

Talent mindset aims to enable providers to create opportunities to value their staff and in doing so meet their challenges in new ways, so increasing organisational capability, creating sustainability and wellbeing. Talent mindset offers a focus for re-examining the understanding the issue of 'talent' in leadership, management and governance, teaching and learning, and 'unrecognised' talent. It seeks to integrate talent mindset into strategy, inform strategic thinking, and build future skills for changing markets.

Benefits³

- Being able to diagnose current awareness of talent and talent mindset.
- Increased organisational capability (greater collective brainpower) to face future challenges
- Discovering hidden capability through offering more democratic development opportunities to more people
- Building confidence and well being

² Link to Guidance document for further information.

³ Link to Framework for further information

- Enabling risk-taking in innovative, stretch projects
- Crafting resilience, agility and growth
- Facilitating collaborative leadership.

Anticipated outcomes⁴

- Energises staff, offering new relationships, stimulating new conversations and ideas
- Solving a range of organisational needs and challenges
- A greater awareness into current practice and thinking in identifying and managing talent.
- Progress, practice and experience at the different stages of talent mindset
- Increased leadership capability
- Experience and confidence in 'releasing talent'
- Increased organisational capability (greater collective brainpower) to face future challenges.

3. EVIDENCE FOR ADOPTING TALENT MINDSET

The Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS) commissioned this expansive and collaborative project in two stages. In the first instance exploring and engaging within the sector, reviewing the concept and thinking on 'talent' and its management. And in the second stage, seeking to facilitate organisations to view how they might begin to move from 'talent management' to a 'talent mindset,' embedding this as an approach to create improved capability, innovation and sustainability. In doing so, actively improve their performance in relation to: teaching and learning, leadership and discovering 'hidden' talent.

⁴ Link to Case study for illustration of outcomes.

This is in recognition that effective talent management is a critical success factor for the future of the learning and skills sector, particularly in an economic climate that demands resilience.

This research explores what is understood by the terms ‘talent’ and ‘talent management’, while considering the implications and outcomes for individuals and organisations when an inclusive or exclusive approach is taken. However in the exploring and engaging phase of this project it became apparent that for any approach on talent management to be transformative it was dependent on the mindset of those who were thinking and taking action to prioritise the topic of ‘talent’ as a strategic issue.

Recent research evidence shows that talent is in fact everywhere and is not exclusive to a particularly small and elite group, needed a new way of thinking and doing for leaders and managers. Talent management needed a mindset that was about possibilities and opportunities and not about staying fixed with particular views of particular people in particular spaces with no or limited possibilities to change this. Such a fixed view reduces the opportunities for improving capability across the organisation and often blocks innovation – particularly when it is offered from unexpected spaces and from unexpected people. This is therefore highly relevant to integrating and embedding equality and diversity into your organisation.

Instead there needs to be an inclusive approach taken to talent management, where managers and leaders adopt a growth mindset about the people they work with. In developing a talent mindset where possibilities and opportunities are the focus, this will facilitate a culture where experiments and alternative approaches are encouraged even when they do not deliver on the first attempt.

The paper ‘**Reclaiming Talent Management**’ written by Rosie Rutherford, LSIS Associate, commissioned by LSIS at the outset of phase one of this project, illustrates the starting place for this discussion and work and can be found as a link at the end in the resources.

However, as the work progressed we realised that staff wanting to pursue talent management further, would need to persuade their colleagues. So we created the **podcast ‘Influencing internally: how to influence colleagues’**, built to address 10 key questions which many staff posed throughout the work.

The resource '**Faulty intel on the war for talent**' brings all these issues together convincingly. Staff also found this useful in internal discussions.

These three documents were absolutely crucial in:

- Developing a talent mindset approach by the associates
- Convincing participants of the traditional exclusive approach and the value of an inclusive one
- A means to explore and understand the key ideas in order to persuade colleagues.

They will reward careful reading.

4. DIAGNOSTIC

A tool to identify your current talent mindset, assess current practice, and develop talent mindset in your organisation

Introduction

This diagnostic is in two parts and both must be completed to help you assess your current position in relation to the development of a talent mindset and strategy.

Part 1 explores where you are and where you might like to be in relation to developing the talents and skills of *everyone* in your organisation. It is presented in five steps:

- Step 1 Current awareness of talent, talent mindset and talent development
- Step 2 Attracting and deploying talent
- Step 3 Identifying unrecognised talent
- Step 4 Developing and supporting talent
- Step 5 Retaining talents.

At the end of each step, stop and reflect on your ratings. Suggestions for actions are also given within this tool kit. See 'Stories and case studies' from organisations that have trialed the talent mindset initiative as well as interventions you might attempt.

Part 2 offers some further deepening questions. Answering these questions will help you to be confident of your starting point, of your current mindset and the actions you need to take to become an organisation that is developing a talent mindset.

Step 1: Current awareness of ‘talent’, ‘talent management’ and D Development: Who has talent? Where are we now?

Only a few are talented and invested in	1	2	3	4	5	All have talent and are invested in
Any review of talent occurs in an adhoc/unplanned way	1	2	3	4	5	We review talent systematically against culture, capability and growth
Sub –Total each column						

If you scored between 2 and 6 – go to Step 1 Interventions to help guide your next actions

Step 2: Attracting and deploying talent: how do we make the most of attracting/deploying? Where are we now:

Managers recruit against their view of the capabilities the organisation requires	1	2	3	4	5	We recruit against a common framework of capabilities which the organisation needs
We fill most vacancies with internal candidates	1	2	3	4	5	We fill most vacancies with external candidates
We often have difficulty attracting good candidates	1	2	3	4	5	We generally have a good field of candidates

We respond to losing a key member of staff in the light of the circumstances at the time	1	2	3	4	5	We assess the risks of losing key people and how we might replace them
Sub –Total each column						
<i>If you scored between 4 and 12 go to Step 2 Interventions to help guide your next actions</i>						
Step 3: Identifying and using ‘unseen talent’: How do we identify and use ‘unseen talent’? Where are we now?						
We know peoples’ current skills but little knowledge of their talent beyond this	1	2	3	4	5	We have a good idea of the talent in the organisation
Sub –Total each column						
<i>if you scored either 1, 2 or 3 go to Step 3 Questions, interventions, stories to help guide your next actions’</i>						
Step 4: Develop talent: Where are we now? How do we develop all staff so our capability is continually extended?						
Training/development focusses on those in key roles or who demonstrate most potential	1	2	3	4	5	Everyone has a PD plan and is entitled to training/ development to improve their potential

We know staff appreciate training received but we have not assessed its contribution to overall org performance	1	2	3	4	5	We evaluate training provided, know its impact on organisational performance
We respond to requests for training from individuals and depts as/when they arise	1	2	3	4	5	We have a clear strategy and priorities to guide training and development we provide
Sub –Total each column						
<i>If you scored between 3 and 9 go to ‘Step 4–Interventions to help guide your next actions’</i>						
Step 5: Retain Talent: Where are we now?						
We do not collect/analyse information on staff turnover.	1	2	3	4	5	We track staff turnover for whole organisation and key roles/departments so we can take action as issue arise
Sub –Total each column						
<i>If you scored 1, 2 or 3 go to ‘Step 5 Interventions to help guide your next actions’</i>						

Diagnostic Part 2 Deepening Questions

Developing a talent mindset requires a fresh way of thinking about the people in your organisation. (See 'What is Talent mindset?') **It enables you to ask, for instance, who gets in, on and up in organisations, who gets promoted, and what are the developmental implications?** These questions aim to deepen your understanding and clarify the key challenges that you face. It links with every part of HR and the quality of your learning and teaching environment. Developing a talent mindset across the organisation is therefore a journey so it will be important to have clarity on the changes you wish to make.

These questions aim to deepen your understanding of your current mindset and clarify the key challenges that you face.

We would encourage you to discuss your responses with other managers in your organisation.

Your organisational challenges	Your response
What are the three key challenges that you face as an organisation?	
Your organisational culture	Your response
Use organisational documents to describe your current organisational culture or use a model such as the cultural web, EFQM or 7S Framework to explore its intricacies http://repository.excellencegateway.org.uk/fedora/objects/importpdf:2543/datastreams/PDF/content	

Your current perspective on talent	Your response
<p>Do you believe you are developing the potential of everyone in your organisation?</p> <p>What barriers currently exist which may prevent development?</p> <p>How do you meet your duty under Equality Act 2010, 9 characteristics?</p>	<p><i>If yes, why? If no, why not?</i></p> <p><i>In your response consider, process, cultural, structural and personal barriers</i></p>
Matching culture, challenges and talent	Your response
<p>What level of confidence do you have that your organisation is able to align its future challenges, culture and current perspective on talent?</p> <p>How will you meet any gaps?</p>	<p><i>Identify your confidence as high, medium or low.</i></p>
<p>If your confidence is either medium or low please go to the talent mindset framework and read the stories from the sector</p> <p>Talent mindset approach may be for you!</p>	

Possible actions to develop your talent mindset – please also see the section below on social media.

Step 1 Actions	Step 2 Actions	Step 3 Actions	Step 4 Actions	Step 5 Actions
<p>Review HR processes</p> <p>Review current tracking processes</p> <p>Review succession planning</p>	<p>If your organisation is not attracting good candidates externally: Review: advertising arrangements, media, wording; terms/conditions; benchmark against similar orgs; focus on aspects staff value most (using survey data); consider 'employer brand'- link to recognised brand strengths to promote yourself as good employer ('of choice') .</p>	<p>Review the opportunities for <i>all</i> staff to: discuss future, technical, professional, competencies; their current state and aspirations; individual development plan and support available.</p>	<p>Review how you can plan overall development for staff so that it is challenging, and has a balance of current and future-focus.</p> <p>Review how you measure the impact on performance.</p>	<p>If your turnover rates are too high: analyse why people are leaving and where to (e.g. exit questionnaire or interview). Triangulate this with other information on possible causes of staff dissatisfaction (e.g. survey, focus group feedback, anecdotal/informal information). From this come to a view re staff commitment/engagement.</p>
<p>Analyse the evidence of the outcome of the development process – who gets in, on up and out</p>	<p>If your organisation is not attracting good internal candidates: Review role and evidence of aspects unattractive to internal staff; terms and conditions; development and training available linked to providing key skills to carry out the role.</p>	<p>Assess whether your organisation has a robust system of recording and updating people's skills.</p>	<p>Complete a capability analysis for current and future growth. What are the gaps? How do you ensure 'development' has 'fit' and impact: is relevant, aligned and measured?</p>	<p>Examine the underlying reasons for dissatisfaction (e.g. role, depts); whole organisational issues. Also consider such issues e.g. pay -normally a 'hygiene factor' but do other underlying issues prompt leavers?</p>
<p>Analyse the implications - what patterns emerge over say, 3 years?</p>	<p>If your organisation is not appointing the right people (who leave or don't perform): Review person spec and role requirements; selection process and how you assess against role requirements; use more than an interview. Consider recruiting</p>	<p>Review opportunities are available: e.g. leadership, management training for non-managers; improvement projects; 'risk' initiatives to source talent; innovation system; mentoring and coaching access; work shadowing internally and</p>	<p>Analyse whether your 'development' strategy meets all partner requirements – OFSTED, SARs; includes stretch initiatives such as visiting excellence, identifying next practice; managing innovation; future skills; ones which build</p>	<p>Consider how you can balance personal and org development: e.g. challenging/stretch activities,</p>

	against org values and required behaviours as well as 'technical' skills; 'alternative' approaches e.g. competency framework or recruit for attitude and not skill.	externally; positive action initiatives to develop staff with protected characteristics? (See Step 1).	agility, resilience, greater collective learning, and value variety; having a range of contributory forums for all staff. At an individual level, development opportunities which encourage staff to 'act their way into egg leadership' through practice; which go beyond current role.	
Review line managers' accountabilities, skills and capabilities in identifying unrecognised talent			Evaluation of development activities which include long and short term impact; staff generated reviews and evaluations; productivity and return on investment measures.	
Review individual opportunities to review and strengthen their development - do individuals share their own plan?				
Explore organisational and leadership culture.				

Finally, analyse the implications of a talent mindset being developed to meet your challenges and define the way in which your organisation can develop this 'mindset'

5. SOCIAL MEDIA

What are we talking about here?

Social media is dynamic and every evolving. It is now an integral part of an organisation's means of communication, both internally and externally and for many individuals. It provides for one-to-one, one-to-many and many-to-many communications. How we communicate has evolved using it, it has revolutionised access to free, instant and global communication and it offers everybody the chance to share and contribute in real time.

In 2012, for the first time the use of social media was the number one web activity and in spring 2013, Lambeth College in London, used crowdsourcing in its community for ideas for its new strategy, with very promising results. The issue with social media is not how to find more exotic ways to ignore it, but to find ways to use it to create greater value. Two examples are provided here.

1. Throughout the talent mindset project we used social media-type forums hosted on the LSIS learning environment. This brought 10 participants together who would otherwise be working separately. The forum, for participants only, was password-protected and aimed to share information, offer mutual support, deepen shared purpose and combat possible isolation, pose key questions, capture emerging insights and stimulate different ways of making progress. Anything that participants thought would sustain collective learning conversations. In this way the 10 became more than the sum of their parts. The forum included podcast, blogs, videos and other materials, and was very effective.
2. In one participant college, a social media forum for the 10 staff leading TM 'projects' and their consultant was hosted on its main website (again password-protected). It also aims to share, support, encourage insights and create greater value. This group also used Twitter and Facebook. Some staff discussed including talent mindset on their LinkedIn profile.

In these instances the challenge is to find ways to capitalise on the democratic, inclusive promise of social media. We envisage that organisations using talent mindset would engage social media as a key part of developing the project.

There are over 30 different platforms for social media and they are still evolving!

6. DEVELOPING A FRAMEWORK FOR A TALENT MINDSET

EXPLORE (How I understand talent mindset)

Understanding talent mindset

Do we have a talent mindset?

Where are we now?

What do we need to do to develop our mindset?

ENGAGE

what is our journey?

What do we need to do?

What are the interventions/projects?

Who is involved?

EMBED

Is TM now part of what we do?

Is it embedded in strategy/processes?

Are metrics in common use?

Does TM define culture?



<p>WHAT IS YOUR MINDSET? WHO IS INVOLVED? WHO IS LEADING? WHERE IS SUPPORT ACCESSED? INTERNAL/ EXTERNAL DRIVERS? CHALLENGES TO MEET THESE? SELF ASSESS AGAINST: CULTURE, CAPABILITY, NEEDS, OPPORTUNITIES. HOW WILL YOU RESOURCE THIS?</p>	<p>HOW WILL YOU WORK WITH PARTNERS? GAIN PERMISSION? TRANSFORM DEFENSIVENESS? HOW WILL YOU RELEASE TALENT? DESIGN DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES? HOW WILL YOU MEASURE CHANGING CAPABILITY? EXPLORE, ENGAGE AND EMBED.</p>	<p>HOW WILL YOU: COMMUNICATE TALENT MINDSET, USE SOCIAL MEDIA? WHAT LEADERSHIP ADJUSTMENTS NEED TO BE MADE? HOW WILL YOU DEVELOP A CULTURE OF GROWTH MINDSET? HOW WILL YOU DEVELOP MANAGERS' CAPABILITY AND COMMITMENT? HOW WILL YOU ENGAGE UNSEEN STAFF?</p>	<p>CAPTURING THE DATA: WHO GETS IN, ON AND UP? REVIEW USING EQIA. IMPROVEMENTS IN TEACHING AND LEARNING IDENTIFYING POTENTIAL BARRIERS TO IMPROVED PERFORMANCE, STRUCTURALLY AND CULTURALLY. REVIEW AGAINST STAFF SURVEY, BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT PLANS ETC.</p>	<p>UPDATE OR DEVELOP TM STRATEGY. ESTABLISH KEY POINTS TO MEASURE IMPACT/ ROI. HOW WILL DATA BE REVIEWED, UPDATED? FUTURE SCANNING. TAKE ACTION TO REMOVE BARRIERS TO DISCOVERY AND RELEASE OF TALENT.</p>
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This framework can also be used as three spirals as illustrated in the Appendix. This demonstrates how committed individuals locally can start it while it is not yet part of their organisational strategy.

7. GUIDANCE

This guidance is drawn from the experience of facilitating providers throughout the LSIS talent mindset initiative. The initial phase involved about 30 providers (Spring 2012) and the second, implementing phase involved 10 providers (October 2012 to March 2013).

At the exploring stage: ‘How I understand talent mindset’

Before you start please:

- Familiarise yourself with ‘talent mindset’: see ‘Research and evidence’ including ‘Faulty intel on the war for talent’ and ‘Reclaiming Talent Management’
- Talent mindset’ is not a ‘quick fix’: it is a longer term process to enable you to get more from your overall organisational developmental processes, and what a source you might have thought was ‘less’ - your own staff
- When completing Diagnostic Part 2, use your local documents: for example (1) in describing your organisational culture, use strategy documents e.g. ‘employer of choice’, ‘engaged’, ‘successful’. Also ask if these are real or aspirational or are there gaps talent mindset could bridge? (2) Has your organisation a ‘trailing culture’? Does it regularly experiment with new initiatives before whole-organisation use? Talent mindset sits well with this culture but does not depend on it. (See ‘Stories and Case Studies’).

Now continue:

- Identify your challenges and what you want from this initiative
- If staff are saying 'I can contribute more' – as we experienced in piloting this - then this initiative is, additionally, for you
- Get upstairs fast - get senior management team 'permission' as an enabler for talent mindset
- Then get downstairs, as fast as possible - to ordinary staff in the body of the organisation. All staff we met welcomed talent mindset
- Talent mindset, while thriving where teams and groups (even sponsored groups) lead it rather than individuals (however powerful), can also be started by committed individuals locally while it is not yet part of their organisational strategy
 - Recognise that talent mindset is challenging terrain: if 'business as usual' is inadequate try 'unusual business' (see examples in 'Stories')
 - Talent mindset may require a differentiated approach: rather than for instance, starting with the self-assessment (LINK diagnostic) initial contacts might benefit from one-to-one coaching to make explicit their mindset
 - Start only when you yourself are convinced of the value of talent mindset.

This stage can be tested through interventions *with colleagues* who need to understand or be convinced. If this is done effectively, you are ready for the next stage.

At the engaging stage: 'How can we lead talent mindset interventions with others?'

- Have an experimental mindset –try things out - and develop a higher rate of learning during this (see trialling culture above)
- Allow iteration

- Leadership: this is an opportunity to encourage ‘unrecognised’ staff to act their way into leadership through practice. Encourage self-leadership for independence and for organisational resilience and distributed leadership to grow capability
- Use exploring, engaging and embedding as a means of measuring progress
- Workshop tasks (led by consultants at this stage) included: What are the characteristics of a ‘developing’ organisation? What development is most productive? How can we identify/develop ‘unrecognised talent’? As part of building innovation systems we also asked: what is creativity and innovation for business purposes? And how do we kill –or grow ideas? How can we identify unrecognised talent; how can we renegotiate existing relationships through increased awareness of the talents within.
- Possible challenges identified included: succession planning; building greater employee engagement; a more effective organisational culture; developing more independent staff; managing uncertainty; embracing future skills; creating formal structures where currently none exist; effective collaboration of multi-disciplinary teams; entrepreneurship; managing innovation; key HR documents e.g. teacher and manager job descriptions – are they sufficiently future-facing? Linked were the three LSIS themes of developing ‘talent’ in teaching/learning; leadership, management and governance; and ‘unseen’ capability.
- External visits: both within the sector and outside to the business sector; staying open to, and generating new ideas is crucial at this stage. A group of three providers visited two successful organisations who had effectively transformed the traditional management model – Happy Computers with a sustained prize-winning history (www.happy.co.uk/happy-computers) and Near Desk, a new start-up (<http://www.neardesk.com>). They interviewed staff at each including the CEOs and identified new ideas they could creatively swipe and use in their own organisations.
- One crucial barrier was what staff called the ‘maintenance culture’ – the seduction of business as usual, leading to ‘more of the same’. In workshops we asked if this was in reality a mindset issue (See Sumantra Ghoshal: *Beware the busy manager* HBR 2002)
- Be clear about your first intervention: clarify its aim, title and audience

- Some comments from participants at this stage: ‘Talent mindset affects all HR processes’ (HR Director) and ‘Some of our traditional development can lead to arrested development of the organization’ (Manager).

This stage can be tested through interventions *on local problems* with the conviction that they can be addressed, through releasing new capability. If this is done effectively, you are ready for the next stage.

At the embedding stage: ‘How can we seek organisational roots and enable talent mindset to flower?’

- Start imperfectly and increase your rate of learning
- In (or if) selecting talent mindset ‘projects/topics’ use the opportunity for ‘unrecognised staff’ to lead them or be included
- Fertile soil can be found among staff who, as they said they ‘feel busy but under-challenged’ and who seek more control over their work
- In selecting projects/topics frame them as open questions e.g. ‘How can we develop independent learners/staff?’ (See ‘Stories’)
- Once a number of talent mindset activities embark, open a social media forum (password-protected) where participants can support each other, develop strategies and ways of progressing, and enable sustained learning
- Develop internal talent mindset marketing – one organisation put blogs, podcasts and webcams on their intranet (and a social media forum-above)
- Encourage some quick wins
- With projects, offer support to project leaders through one-to one coaching (or groups, as they prefer) (See ‘Stories’).
- Recognise that talent mindset will challenge the traditional management model. It cedes some control to staff – some of whom are ‘unrecognised’ and deliberately given development opportunities previously available only to staff who might have been more ‘opportunity-endowed’
- Support can be offered in workshops around these themes: e.g. developing independent leadership, overcoming barriers and transforming defensive routines, in creative problem solving, and in using Explore, Engage and Embed to measure progress.

This stage can be tested out as *the effects of staff-led interventions begin to emerge*, with small improvement activities in ‘problem’ areas and their iterative negotiation into sustainable improvement (See ‘Stories’)

8. STORIES AND CASE STUDIES

STORIES

These emerged from the rich mix of organisations the Associates worked with on talent mindset from October 2012 to March 2013. They embraced reluctant ones, convinced ones, and those who immediately seized it and made more of it.

- *The point about mindset is you can't come to talent mindset with half a mind, or an unconvinced one - it demands the commitment of a full mind...* (Teacher)
- *Here, it is possible to find managers and teachers whose work should be based on a growth mindset, being the opposite... Talent mindset can re-convince them...*(Teacher)
- *Talent mindset has an effect on all HR processes* (HR Director)
- **Who do we convince first:** A senior manager at one work based learning provider took some time to be convinced that TM could address the challenges they faced. We realised that our original diagnostic and framework needed amending to include key questions on what exactly their mindset actually was, and how available (to all staff) development opportunities were, and how effective. Having completed this amended version, the manager moved to the engaging stage ⁵ as she said: *'I realise who leads talent mindset in the organisation is crucial – this work has helped me change my own mindset (greater conviction towards growth)*. This reflecting –it can be nudged-on through coaching ⁶ is a necessary process, may take some time and can't be short-circuited if organisations are to get to the engaging stage with the necessary energy and commitment to embark on the embedding one.

⁵ See Guidance.

⁶ See Guidance

- **Size (doesn't) matter:** Length (of service) is less important than growth (of capability) in building organisational development. Some examples: in one workshop 21 members of staff had 184 years' experience (average eight years). When asked if they felt adequately 'developed' they said not. In another college, 31 staff had 209 years' experience (average seven years). They also said they did not feel 'adequately developed'. If they were, would these organisations now be better equipped to handle more strident challenges? And what would that development have involved? These are exactly the issues talent mindset seeks to address...
- *'I used to be known here but have become 'invisible'... I want more and I want to show them I can give more... This seems to happen to a lot of women... talent mindset gives me a great opportunity to engage again'...* ('unrecognised talent' – seeking recognition)
- *'Being in my position there are limited opportunities to showcase what you've got to employers'...* (Apprentice, now leading a talent mindset project under the overall heading of building innovation into ordinary work/releasing talent)
- *'So we're saying that talent mindset is a means of getting far more from far more people in our organisation – if we change how we offer 'far more' and who we offer it to'...* (Senior Manager)
- *'This talent mindset looks like a chance to put some reality-colour – some substance - into 'diversity' here'* (black Part-time Teacher)
- *'It's too risky! Maybe though a greater risk would be doing more (development) of the same, with the same people –only those who continually come forward'...* (Internal debate among managers, at the exploring stage). This organisation decided TM was too risky – though really, was a low priority. Six months on they are seeking ways to be more entrepreneurial, innovative and engage their staff more
- *'Why should we have to ask if we want to improve how we ourselves work'...* (Teacher, welcoming the potential of talent mindset to enable them to contribute more)
- *'Pooling of ideas that have come through making and strengthening links with each other'*
- *'Meeting up with everyone and finding out more about everyone'. 'It has made us feel appreciated and supported'*
- *'It has made me think about my own personal development and what I could perhaps do in the future'*

- ‘It enabled us to identify ways to identify the positives in myself and others’
- ‘... this helped me understand who I am and what I should work on’.

Case Study 1.

From business as usual to unusual business

Having completed the original talent mindset diagnostic and framework (amended here) and realising they were ready to get far more from talent mindset, one college adopted an innovative approach to bring together a range of needs. These needs included structural ones e.g. improving services, seeking excellence, and process ones such as developing greater staff autonomy and distributed leadership. They integrated these into an overall heading called: ‘**Building innovation into ordinary work/releasing talent**’, as a housing for a range of mini-projects to address current challenges (some enduring ones) and also build them a Managing Innovation system. These projects would be led by ‘unrecognised staff’ (including an Apprentice); managers were specifically excluded though could act as enablers and supporters. The operational sequence was as follows:

- **Exploration stage:** the senior contact, a senior manager, was a keen advocate of talent mindset, actively briefed their senior management team, who were onside in enabling a ‘welcoming climate’ (experimental, trialling) for talent mindset.
- **Engaging stage:** the consultant facilitated workshops on talent mindset with a range of staff involving senior managers, support staff and teachers and invited staff to take part in talent mindset activities. Many offered. Workshop themes were: What are the characteristics of a ‘developing’ organisation? What development is most productive? How can we identify/develop ‘unrecognised talent’?
- **Embedding stage:** potential ‘leaders’ were invited to participate and select projects which were meaningful, were challenges the organisation faced and could not be addressed by *thinking as usual* – so needed new thinking. The projects were expressed as open questions, for example, how can we build greater trust here, or what does ‘career’ mean here?

Each 'leader' was asked to '*start imperfectly*': suggest their title, prompted by 'what professionally frustrates you here, which you want to improve?' (And what does the organisation need); their initial interventions, and some success measures. Refinements and other props would emerge on the journey.

Resourcing: some minimal seeding resourcing was agreed but far greater was project leaders' entitlement to draw on whole organisation resources. Support at a collective learning level was via a new social media forum for sustained learning conversations. The initial workshop with senior managers, facilitated by the consultant, was designed to enable them to say 'yes' to TM through two activities - 'Say no to no' and 'How to kill – and grow - ideas' both of which were welcomed. Continuing support was through internal marketing (marketing and HR publicised the projects) and each project had agreed branding with associated logos etc. Staff were excited and surprised – exactly the kind of risky, enabling climate that democratic development can thrive in.

The Projects: these were all expressed as '*Working titles*' to allow for iteration and change as they progressed. They included: How can we Lead Apprenticeships? How can we use hidden talent for business development? How can we change mindsets and develop support staff? What is a C21 'career': how would this work here? Managing Innovation/Innovation Hub: How can we capture, strengthen and exploit new ideas here? What matters here: how can we build engaging, public conversations? How to build a learning culture designed to create autonomous learners and autonomous staff? How can we build organisational responsibility and trust? How can we embrace diversity (in our development processes) to make us outstanding? As this gained momentum more projects were added.

Project leaders were supported through individual and group coaching and also key workshops inputs on: 'Transforming leadership - developing leadership for independence'; 'Transforming defensive routines', and 'Creative problem solving'. Key also was the social media forum solely (at this stage) for participants.

These projects started well and even with traditional 'distractions' of an Ofsted Inspection and a new build they are continuing energetically. Staff welcomed the changed mindset, saying: *'we can think differently and more productively... gain greater control over our work... and improve it... we don't have to ask...'*

Case study 2

Creating a truly collaborative approach to adult and family community learning

A community learning organisation enthusiastically adopted exploring the possibilities of developing a talent mindset. They recognised the mutual benefits of identifying talent and potential as a way of encouraging new thinking and possibilities for future growth and sustainability. Needs centered around engaging hard to reach communities and stretching their limited resources in creative and experimental ways. Creating opportunities for collaborative working; strengthening connections and formalizing opportunities that currently occur on an ad hoc basis were stated aims for the project.

- **Exploration stage:** the Director and her assistant completed the diagnostic and with the consultant designed a workshop for the leadership team to explore what a talent mindset might look like for their organisation. The workshop used a variety of techniques to appreciate the different qualities of the team and how these might be harnessed and developed. As a result of the workshop new systems were introduced which played to their strengths, and ideas generated in terms of maintaining values and 'climate'; establishing 'charter of expectations' etc.
- **Engaging stage:** the second phase was launched with a workshop for tutors with the aim of involving tutors in how their personal needs and talents might be met and extended. The consultant used an appreciative inquiry approach to energise and inspire the team and projects were identified and groups formed to work on specific aspects of the talent mindset strategy.

- **Embedding stage:** the third phase will involve community, volunteers and learners and aims to collaborate with volunteers and learners on issues of organisational sustainability and the integration of talent mindset into the organisation.

This phase has yet to begin but so far, the journey has been positive, enriching and energising. It has resulted in new ideas, changed systems and invigorated staff. Furthermore the senior leaders have been rewarded with a rich pool of new leadership talents emerging.

9. BACKGROUND READING AND RESOURCES

Recommended books:

Caplan Janice *The value of talent* Kogan Page 2011

Syed Matthew *Bounce* Fourth Estate 2011

Ankersen Rasmus *The Gold Mine Effect Crack the Secrets of High Performance* Icon 2012

Dweck Dr Carol *Mindset How you can Fulfil Your Potential* Constable & Robinson 2006 .

Other background reading:

CIPD. Opening up Talent for Business Success. Integrating Talent Management and Diversity. (2010).

CIPD. Fighting back through Talent Innovation. Talent Management under Threat in Uncertain Times. (2010).

CIPD. War on Talent? Talent management under threat in uncertain times. (2009)

Foster, Sir A. (2005) Realising the Potential – A review of the Future of Further Education.

Fox Justin The economics of well-being Harvard Business Review Jan-Feb 2012 pp79-83

Iles Paul and Preece David Talent Management and Career Development chapter □□□ in Gower Handbook of Leadership and Management Development **Edited by Jeff Gold, Richard Thorpe and Alan Mumford** fifth edition **2012**

Kandola, Binna. *The Value of Difference, Eliminating Bias in Organisations*. (2009) Pearn Kandola.

Ryan K Building a team of players Harvard Business Review Jan-Feb 2012 pp 43-46

Stewart, J. Professor. Developing Skills through Talent Management. SSSA Catalyst – Issue 6. February 2008.

Web resources:

CIPD What is human capital? What is Talent Management?

[CIPD Talent Management: An Overview \(2012\)](#)

[Learning and talent development strategy \(2013\) CIPD`](#)

[Talent Management and Succession Planning \(2011\) CIPD.](#)

[Sir Ken Robinson: TED 2010.](#)

Rutherford Rosie '*Reclaiming talent management*' 2012

[The Talent Myth; Are smart people overated? Malcolm Gladwell](#)

[Faulty intel in the war for talent Leadership, Innovation and Strategy 2012](#)

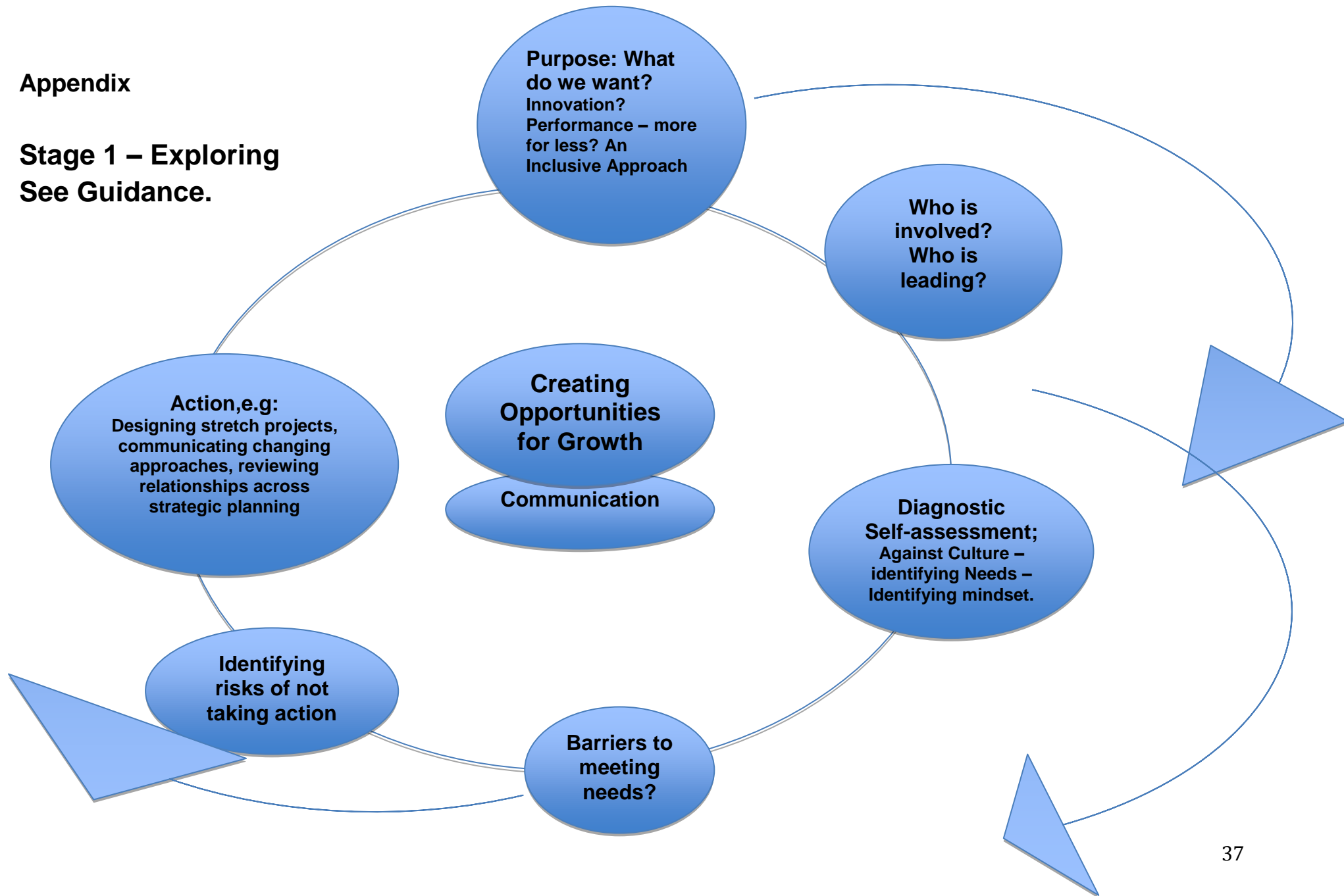
Podcasts:

Donal Carroll Key *Minding your mindset*27/3 (1) 'Influencing internally': How to work with colleagues Dec 2012

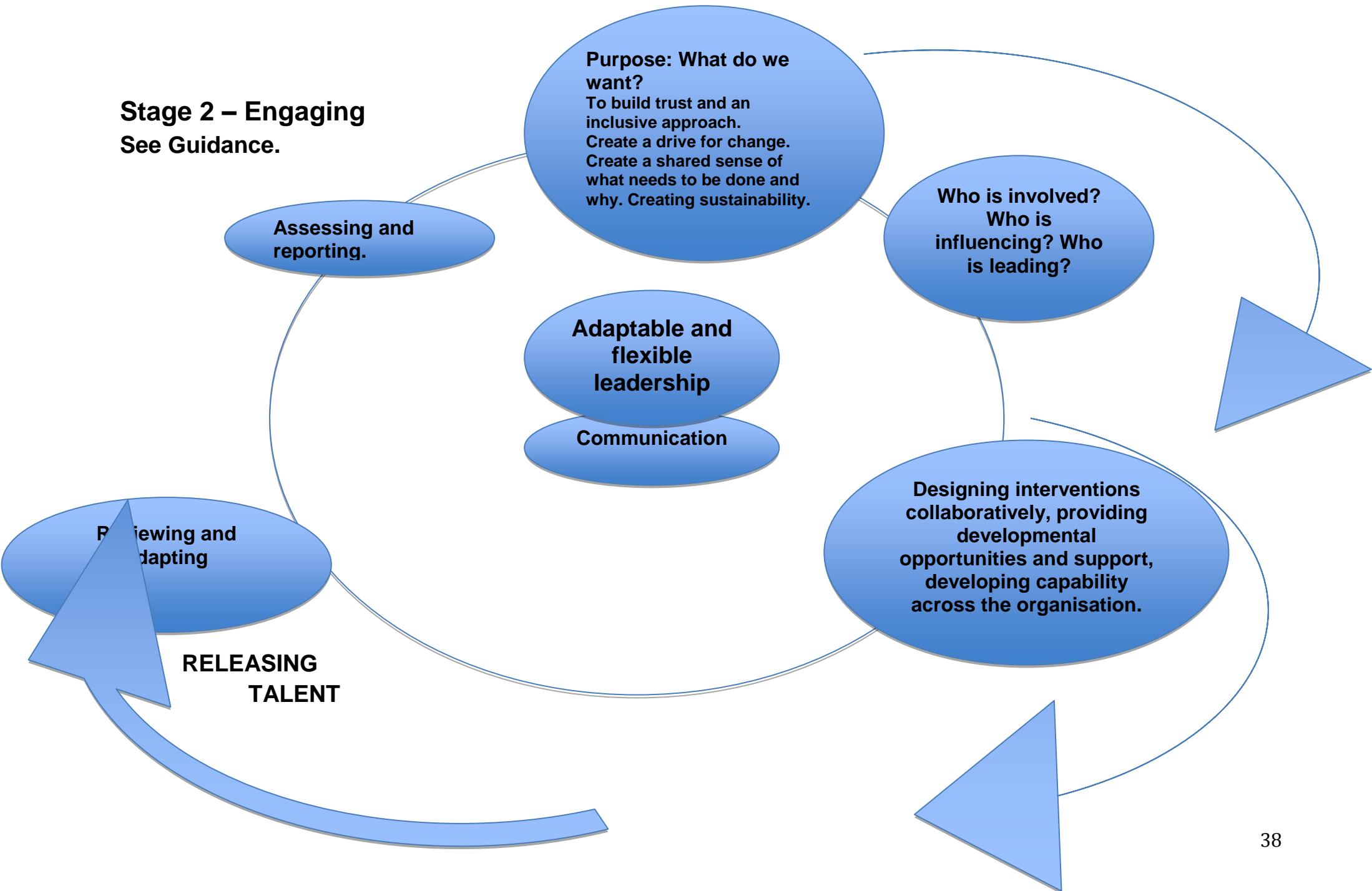
Both podcasts on Talent mindset forum

Appendix

**Stage 1 – Exploring
See Guidance.**



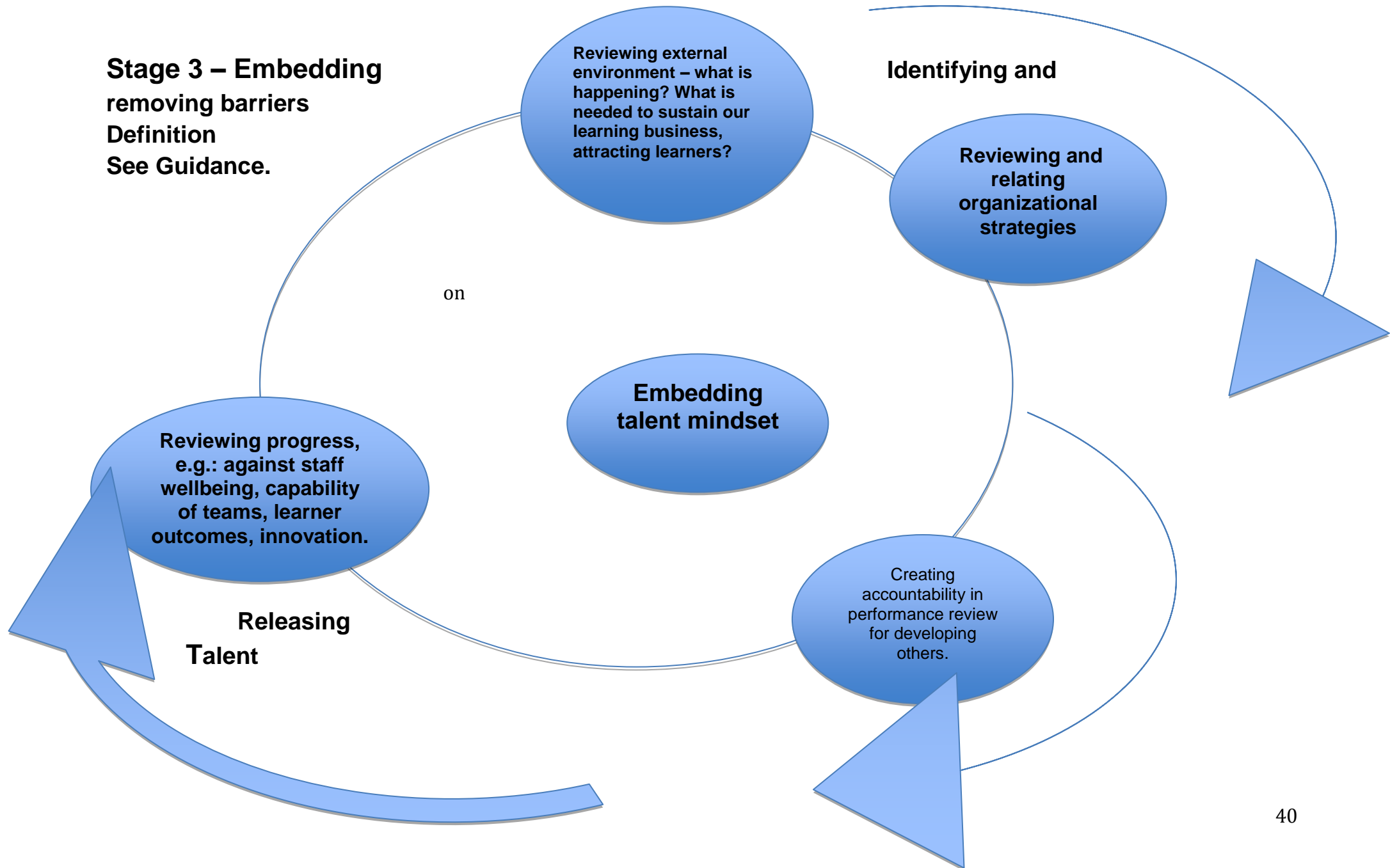
Stage 2 – Engaging
See Guidance.



MEASURING



**Stage 3 – Embedding
removing barriers
Definition
See Guidance.**



**Developing
Talent**

**Auditing processes for
inclusion; e.g.:
recruitment, development
and retention.**